The McMaster Students Union

SPENCER
NESTICO-SEMIANIW
Vice President (Education)

Many students enrol at McMaster with a certain preconception of the City of Hamilton. Students often associate Hamilton with the steel industry, and many doubt whether the city is safe, welcoming, or student-friendly. The more I’ve become involved with the city, however, the more I’ve learned about its fascinating culture, its artistic community, and the environment it can offer students. As Hamilton continues to grow and change, it is important that students contribute their voices to its development. To this end, I’m pleased to announce the MSU’s second Change Camp, a conference where students can join together with their neighbours in the McMaster and Hamilton communities to move our city forward.

Change Camp is a fantastic opportunity to make connections, voice your thoughts on where Hamilton should go as a city, and learn more about what the city has to offer. This year, the event will be hosted on March 3, from 5:30pm - 9:00pm, in the David Braley Health Sciences Centre. The location is fitting, as the Centre itself demonstrates the value of community partnerships, having been funded and developed by both McMaster University and the City of Hamilton. The conference will host Mayor Eisenberger, McMaster President Patrick Deane, and various student leaders, elected officials, and community partners.

Change Camp 2016 will feature a MarketPlace, which will host leaders and organizations from the MSU, the University, the City, and the community. Students will be able to meet these people, learn about their work, and learn about opportunities to partner and volunteer with them. The event will also include discussions facilitated by students and community members on topics such as course-related community engagement, Syrian refugees in Hamilton, and participatory budgeting within the municipal government. A summary report on Change Camp proceedings and outcomes will be written and made public several weeks later.

Change Camp began as an event run by the MSU Student Community Support Network (SCSN), focused on student conversations, but last year the conference was greatly expanded to include a wide range of community partners. Topics at last year’s Change Camp included youth employment, green spaces in Hamilton, and transit issues, among several others. Recommendations in the final report included expansion of art crawls, support for Light Rail Transit (LRT), and inclusive green spaces throughout the city. The full report is available on the MSU website and features the contributions of many McMaster students.

In addition to developing recommendations for projects and policies, Change Camp provides an opportunity for McMaster students to develop closer relations with Mohawk College, Redeemer University College, Mayor Eisenberger, and other key figures and organizations in Hamilton. If you are interested in taking part in this important discussion, please register via msu.mcmaster.ca/changecamp. It is a great opportunity to tour the beautiful Health Sciences facility, contribute to community visions for the future of Hamilton, and learn more about the city in which we live and learn.

As Hamilton continues to grow and change, it is important that students contribute their voices to its development.